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Resolution adopted by the Economic and Social Council on 25 July 2017

[*on a proposal considered in plenary meeting (E/2017/L.32)*]

2017/28. Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020

The Economic and Social Council,

Recalling the Istanbul Declaration[1] and the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020,[2] adopted by the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, held in Istanbul, Turkey, from 9 to 13 May 2011, and endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 65/280 of 17 June 2011, in which the Assembly called upon all the relevant stakeholders to commit to implementing the Programme of Action,

Reaffirming the overarching goal of the Istanbul Programme of Action of overcoming the structural challenges faced by the least developed countries in order to eradicate poverty, achieve the internationally agreed development goals and enable graduation from the least developed country category,

Recalling the Political Declaration adopted by the Comprehensive High-level Midterm Review of the Implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020, held in Antalya, Turkey, from 27 to 29 May 2016, and endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 70/294 of 25 July 2016, in which the Assembly called upon all the relevant stakeholders to commit to implementing the Declaration,

Recalling also the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,[3] the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development,[4] the Paris Agreement adopted under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change,[5] the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030[6] and the New Urban Agenda adopted in Quito by the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III),[7]

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[1] *Report of the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, Istanbul, Turkey, 9–13 May 2011* (A/CONF.219/7), chap. I.

[2] Ibid., chap. II.

[3] General Assembly resolution 70/1.

[4] General Assembly resolution 69/313, annex.

[5] See FCCC/CP/2015/10/Add.1, decision 1/CP.21, annex.

[6] General Assembly resolution 69/283, annex II.

[7] General Assembly resolution 71/256, annex.

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Recalling further its resolution 2016/15 of 26 July 2016 on the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 71/238 of 21 December 2016,

Noting the theme of its high-level segment of 2017, "Eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions through promoting sustainable development, expanding opportunities and addressing related challenges" and the theme of the high-level political forum on sustainable development in 2017, "Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world",

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020;[6]

2. *Calls upon* the least developed countries, their development partners, the United Nations system and all other actors to further intensify their efforts to fully and effectively implement, in a coordinated, coherent and expeditious manner, the commitments that have been made in the Istanbul Programme of Action[2] in its eight priority areas, namely, (*a*) productive capacity, (*b*) agriculture, food security and rural development, (*c*) trade, (*d*) commodities, (*e*) human and social development, (*f*) multiple crises and other emerging challenges, (*g*) mobilizing financial resources for development and capacity-building, and (*h*) good governance at all levels;

3. *Invites* the private sector, civil society and foundations to contribute to the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action in their respective areas of competence in line with the national priorities of the least developed countries;

4. *Acknowledges* the potential of the Technology Bank for the Least Developed Countries to foster productive capacity, structural transformation, poverty eradication and sustainable development in least developed countries, and in this regard takes note of General Assembly resolution 70/216 of 22 December 2015, in which the Assembly outlined the steps necessary to launch and operationalize the Technology Bank, funded by voluntary contributions, and to ensure continued support for the Technology Bank from all relevant stakeholders, also takes note of Assembly resolution 71/251 of 23 December 2016, and in this context encourages Member States, as well as international organizations, foundations and the private sector, to provide voluntary financial contributions and operational support to the Technology Bank to ensure its early operationalization and effective operation;

5. *Reaffirms* that the least developed countries, as the most vulnerable group of countries, need enhanced global support to overcome the structural challenges they face in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,[3] and in this regard calls upon the international community to prioritize and strengthen support from all sources to facilitate the coordinated implementation and coherent follow-up to and monitoring of the Istanbul Programme of Action, the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development[4] in the least developed countries;

6. *Recognizes* that significant additional domestic public resources, including at the subnational level, supplemented by international assistance as appropriate, will be critical to realizing sustainable development and achieving the

[6] A/72/83-E/2017/60.

Sustainable Development Goals, and that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda acknowledge the centrality of domestic resource mobilization underscored by the principle of national ownership, and also recognizes that, while the least developed countries have made considerable efforts to mobilize domestic resources and attract private investment, further progress is needed, and underlines the importance of strengthening domestic enabling environments, including the rule of law and combating corruption at all levels and in all its forms;

7. *Expresses its concern* that, while the least developed countries are in need of global support, bilateral official development assistance (ODA) to least developed countries declined by 3.9 per cent in 2016 compared with 2015, according to preliminary numbers, and underlines the urgent need to reverse the decline, while expressing its appreciation to those few countries that have met or surpassed their commitments to 0.7 per cent of gross national income (GNI) for ODA to developing targets and the target of 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of GNI for ODA to the least developed countries, calls upon ODA providers to fulfil their respective ODA commitments to the least developed countries, and encourages ODA providers to consider setting a target to provide at least 0.2 per cent of GNI for ODA to the least developed countries, while reiterating that an important use of international public finance, including official development assistance, is to catalyse additional resource mobilization from other sources, public and private;

8. *Recognizes* that private business activity, investment and innovation are major drivers of productivity, inclusive economic growth and job creation, and that private international capital flows, in particular foreign direct investment, along with a stable international financial system, are vital complements to national development efforts, and in this regard expresses its concern that foreign direct investment flows to the least developed countries retreated by 13 per cent in 2016 compared with 2015, underlines the need for substantially increased foreign direct investment flows to the least developed countries, recognizes in this regard that private capital flows, in particular foreign direct investment, play a complementary and catalytic role in building and strengthening productive capacity in the least developed countries, and calls upon the least developed countries to continue to strengthen the underlying investment climate and upon development partners to continue to provide enhanced financial and technical support to those countries so as to develop their productive capacities;

9. *Reiterates* the invitation by the General Assembly to the Economic and Social Council, at its next annual forum on financing for development follow-up, to discuss adopting and implementing investment promotion regimes for the least developed countries, pursuant to the relevant resolutions on the matter, including General Assembly resolution 69/313 of 27 July 2015 on the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the mandate of the annual forum on financing for development follow-up set out therein, invites the President of the Council to include the outcome of this discussion in his summary of the forum on financing for development follow-up, and recalls that the intergovernmentally agreed conclusions and recommendations of the forum will inform the overall follow-up and review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the high-level political forum on sustainable development;

10. *Reaffirms* the essential role of gender equality, the empowerment of women and girls and the realization of their human rights, and of full and productive employment and decent work in achieving sustainable development, reaffirms that women and girls must enjoy equal access to high-quality education, health, including

sexual and reproductive health, access to finance and economic opportunities and resources and political participation, as well as equal opportunities with men and boys for employment and decent work, leadership and decision-making at all levels, also reaffirms the commitment to work for a significant increase in the investments to close the gender gap and strengthen support for institutions, including criminal and civil justice systems, in relation to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls at all levels, and further reaffirms continuing support for the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls, including through the engagement of men and boys;

11. *Recalls* General Assembly resolutions 59/209 of 20 December 2004 and 67/221 of 21 December 2012 on a smooth transition strategy for countries graduating from the list of least developed countries, and underscores that the efforts of the least developed countries towards sustainable graduation are underpinned by their ownership and leadership, as the primary responsibility for development lies with the countries themselves, but that they need to be supported by concrete and substantial international partnership measures in a spirit of mutual accountability for development results;

12. *Recognizes* the importance of the reviews by the Committee for Development Policy of the graduation criteria for the least developed countries, recommends that the reviews be comprehensive, taking into account all aspects of the evolving international development context, including relevant agendas, and in this regard takes note of the decision of the Committee to implement a multi-year work programme for a comprehensive review of the least developed country criteria[9] and looks forward to its outcome;

13. *Reiterates* that wider recognition of least developed country status could stimulate and facilitate better integration of the Istanbul Programme of Action into development policies, and in this regard takes note of the survey conducted by the Committee for Development Policy to collect information on the recognition and application of the least developed country category by entities of the United Nations development system and the recommendations of the Committee;[10]

14. *Underlines* the need to ensure the mutual accountability of the least developed countries and their development partners for delivering the commitments undertaken under the Istanbul Programme of Action, reiterates that the Development Cooperation Forum should continue to take into consideration the Programme of Action when it reviews the trends in international development cooperation, as well as policy coherence for development, and stresses the need for providing appropriate space and platforms for structured dialogue between the least developed countries and their development partners;

15. *Welcomes* the fact that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Paris Agreement adopted under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change,[5] the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030,[6] the New Urban Agenda adopted in Quito by the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III),[7] the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030[11] and the call

[9] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2017, Supplement No. 13* (E/2017/33), chap. I, sect. B, para. 12.

[10] Ibid., chap. I, sect. A, para. 5.

[11] See General Assembly resolution 71/285.

for action of the United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development,[12] underscore that the most vulnerable countries, including the least developed countries, deserve special attention and reflect the concerns and aspirations of the least developed countries, recalls the decision contained in the 2030 Agenda that effective linkages will be made with the follow-up and review arrangements of all relevant United Nations conferences and processes, including on the least developed countries, underlines the importance of strong synergy in the implementation of the recently adopted agendas and the Istanbul Programme of Action at the national and subnational levels, and encourages coordination and coherence in the follow-up of their implementation;

16. *Expresses its serious concern* at the fact that the share of expenditure for operational activities for development of the United Nations system in the least developed countries is declining, urges the United Nations development system to continue to prioritize allocations to the least developed countries, while reaffirming that the least developed countries, as the most vulnerable group of countries, need enhanced support to overcome structural challenges that they face in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and requests the United Nations development system to provide assistance to graduating countries in the formulation and implementation of their national transition strategies and to consider country-specific support for graduated countries for a fixed period of time and in a predictable manner;

17. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the Council at its 2018 session, under the sub-item entitled "Review and coordination of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020" of the item entitled "Implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits", a progress report on the implementation of the Programme of Action.

49th plenary meeting
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[12] See General Assembly resolution 71/312, annex.